



**Seattle
Design
Commission**

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

1 May 2003

Gregory J. Nickels,
Mayor

Donald Royse
Chair

Laura Ballock

Ralph Cipriani

Jack Mackie

Cary Moon

Iain M. Robertson

Nic Rossouw

David Spiker

Sharon E. Sutton

Tory Laughlin Taylor

John Rahaim,
Executive Director

Layne Cubell,
Commission Coordinator

Projects Reviewed

Upcoming Projects Briefing

2040 East Madison Street

Seattle University

Bitter Lake Reservoir Open Space

I-5 Open Space

Mt. Baker Rowing and Sailing Boathouse

Cowen Park Shelter House Improvements

Convened: 8:30am

Adjourned: 5:00pm

Commissioners Present

Donald Royse, Chair

Laura Ballock

Ralph Cipriani

Cary Moon

Iain M. Robertson

Nic Rossouw

David Spiker

Tory Laughlin Taylor

Staff Present

John Rahaim

Layne Cubell

Brad Gassman

Anna O'Connell



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Construction & Land Use

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1 May 2003 Project: Upcoming Projects Briefing

Phase: Staff Briefing

Attendee: Beverly Barnett, Seattle Dept. of Transportation

Time: 1 hour

Summary: Seattle Design Commission staff updated the Commission on projects they will be seeing in the next few months. The Commission will be touring several sites in May that were previously reviewed and are now under construction and nearing completion. Several big projects including the Olympic Sculpture Park, South Lake Union Park, and the Parks and Recreation and Seattle Public Libraries collocation project at Northgate will be presented in June. In addition, a number of vacations will be presented to the Commission at these meetings.

The Design Commission will be touring the Central Library, City Hall, and several projects in Capitol Hill in May. The Olympic Sculpture Park and South Lake Union Park will be before the Commission again in June. It will be the presentation of the final schematic design for the South Lake Union Park project. The three Northgate projects, which include a library, community center, and park, have all been awarded to Miller Hull. The Planning Commission will be involved as well because of their work on the 5th Ave. plan. The first piece of this plan is to look into making 5th Ave. a more urban place and that goal should be incorporated in this project. Site Workshop is the landscape architecture firm on the team.

Several street and alley vacations will be presented in the next few meetings. High Point is going to Council on May 5th for street vacations and they will vote on this issue two weeks later. It would be good for a commissioner to be present at the May 5th meeting because most of the vacation information will be presented then. At the Richmond Laundry site, proponents were talking about an alley vacation, but are now looking at creating a skybridge. The 2040 East Madison Street project that is being presented today needs to go through design review. The master plan calls for a nighttime entertainment/restaurant district and it is close to good public and open spaces such as a community center, playground, and the arboretum. The area is in a transition and is currently low density, but is zoned for 65-foot development. The Seattle University vacation is an east-west alley vacation on a street that has other development such as housing. The Commission will look today at the proposed public benefits and see if proponents have met the Commission's previous concerns. Harborview is looking at an alley vacation on the northern portion of 9th Ave. Council has granted conceptual approval of both a street and alley vacation. The Design Commission will follow up on the conditions that are written in, specifically streetscape implementation and the look and feel of the building over the street. The Commission will also see a petition for a street vacation by Starbucks to create a plaza at Utah Ave. and Lander St. A Monorail station is also proposed for the north side of Lander St.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like to know if there will be a specific action taken at the May 5th City Council meeting.
 - A representative from SDOT stated that there may be on the vacations, but most things will be voted on at the next meeting.
- Would like to know if the Design Review Board has a policy on vacations.
 - CityDesign staff stated that the Board talks about them, but usually the Commission sees the vacation petitions first. The Capitol Hill Board is particularly familiar with them and generally their concerns are scale and how the alley breaks down the scale.

- Feels that the subcommittee on communications and outreach should also, in addition to the website, annual report, and awards, make note every time the Commission comes across land use codes that stifle innovative design and get this message out.
- Believes that the underlying problem of parking also needs to be tackled.
- Suggests that the Commission could write a position paper or memo to address the land use code undergoing changes.

1 May 2003 Project: 2040 East Madison Street

Phase: Alley Vacation

Previous Review: None

Presenter: Carlos de la Torre, Sclater Partners Architects

Attendees: Scott Kemp, Dept. of Design, Construction, and Land Use

Jay Reeves, Sclater Partners Architects

Barry Lamb, Barry J. Lamb, Inc.

Marilyn Senour, Seattle Dept. of Transportation

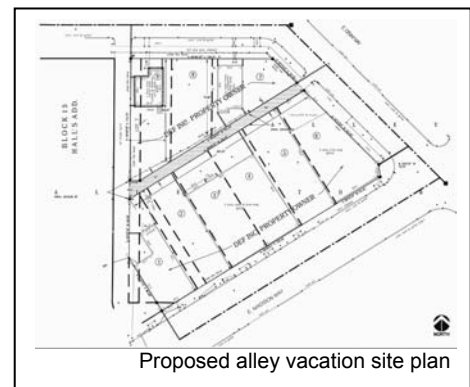
Beverly Barnett, Seattle Dept. of Transportation

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00304)

Action: The Commission appreciates the strong contextual framework for a complex set of issues and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- The Design Commission requests that, at the next review, proponents present a strong diagram that shows public use such as pedestrian patterns, vehicular traffic, and neighborhood needs, and present a nine-square block urban design analysis;
- urges proponents to more fully explore the urban design aspects of giving up the alley and address this within the context of the development including looking at the impacts of scale modulation with the alley, the way the alley provides a transition between the commercial mixed use zone and the residential zone, and how the service aspects of the alley function, and to acknowledge all of these within the design proposal;
- would like to see substantive public benefit in the context of what is appropriate to this neighborhood;
- urges proponents to think more carefully about the public benefit—it must be a workable space that can be used by the public—and questions an enclosed space, which could be a throw-away space that does not enliven the neighborhood;
- would like to see proponents clarify the public benefit versus what the project would bring regardless of whether or not the alley is vacated;
- encourages proponents to further investigate the possibilities of scheme C, a reduced vacation alternative, and bring the same level of creativity and energy to its design as were given to schemes A and B so a true comparison can be made; and
- does not recommend approval of the alley vacation.

This vacation is in the Madison-Miller neighborhood and is an east-west alley between two properties owned by one person. The main reason proponents would like the vacation is to get the best development use for the property as a whole rather than as two properties. The proposed project will be a multiuse residential and retail development. An alley vacation would make underground parking, construction, design flexibility, and a continuous façade easier. The existing alley is 10 feet wide and does not function for either fire or garbage collection. Because of safety issues in the



neighborhood the Police Dept. asked that it be gated and closed from 6 PM–6 AM. This site is located in the central part of the urban village. The urban village plan called for the area to be redeveloped and included this vacation. The project is bordered by multifamily development to the east and by E. Denny Way and 20th Ave. E. Madison St. to the south is zoned 65-foot residential with retail on the first floor and East Madison St. to the north is zoned 65-foot residential with residential on all floors.

There is a hodgepodge of commercial and institutional buildings in the area and further to the north is a more residential neighborhood. It has Miller Park Community Center and a playfield, while the residential area to the south has a YMCA and two parks. The area to the north is seen as the pedestrian core and with a new mixed use development, a Safeway, and other supporting retail coming in at an existing signaled intersection. There are two bus stops near the site and people come through the alley and around the site to get to E. Madison St. East Denny Way is not an arterial and other surrounding streets are also residential.

The team is looking at a development that will encompass the whole block. Currently surrounding the site, there is a vacant lot for parking on E. Denny Way to the west of the site across the north/south alley and several small multifamily (3–4 stories) that create a transition from the smaller residential scale to a larger scale. All of the existing buildings along the Madison St. elevation will be demolished, as will two existing single-family homes along E. Denny Way.

Scheme A

This is a larger scale project than what is existing, although on the Madison St. façade a node is created with by a courtyard. The public benefit is the provision of this public space off of Madison St. that breaks up the façade and provides space on a long block. Adjacent to this space will be retail and the space will provide links to an existing private park for Planned Parenthood. There is also the possibility of an interior community room for the public within the building. On the upper level there is a private terrace for apartment residents.



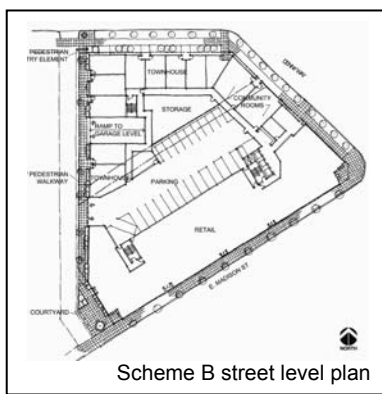
Scheme A street level plan



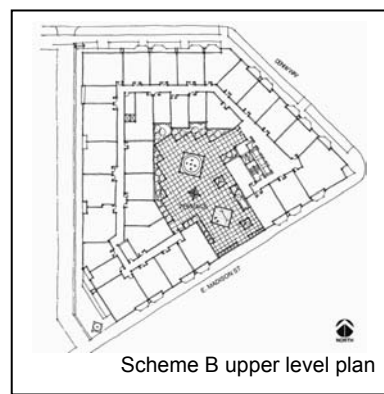
Scheme A upper level plan

Scheme B

In this scheme, the team looked at the current use of the site and at the urban design analysis to address the amount of pedestrian and car traffic. The north-south alley is the main entrance for the development and is a pedestrian link for people who come down Madison St. This alley has an extra 8 feet of pedestrian space with landscaping and raised paving and links Madison St. and Denny Way. An



Scheme B street level plan



Scheme B upper level plan

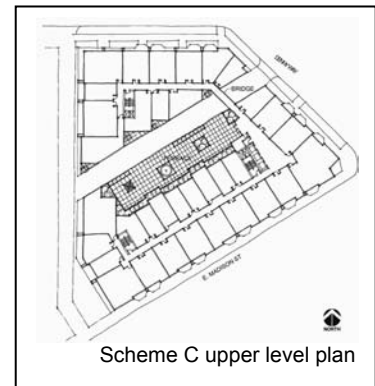
entryway at the end of the alley will make the pedestrian link apparent. The corner of the building is brought in a little so it is not so imposing on the streetscape. Again, in this scheme, the upper terrace is for residents of the development.

Scheme C

Scheme C retains the alley. With redevelopment, the alley will need to be improved and will increase from 10-feet to 20-feet wide. The development loses some area for the first floor of the building. The alley remains for pedestrian and vehicular use. The building will be built out to the full envelope and developed to 65-feet high on all sides as in A and B. The upper sides of the building will be pulled in about 10 feet. The team would need a subterranean easement for a parking garage.



Scheme C street level plan



Scheme C upper level plan

The elevations of schemes A and B have the feeling of two separate buildings with an interior courtyard, whereas the elevation of scheme C is continuous. The materials will give the building a corrugated texture.



Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like to know if there are utilities in the alley.
 - Proponents stated that there are not.
- Would like to know if all schemes have the same number of residential units.
 - Proponents stated that there are at least ten less in scheme C.
- Would like to know how many residential units there will be.
 - Proponents stated that there will be between 192 and 200, depending on the mix.

- Would like to know the current land use for each of the properties currently on the site.
 - Proponents stated that they are as follows: a commercial building with a grocery store on the first floor and residential above; a restaurant and bar with residential above; an apartment building; a restaurant and bar; three vacant parcels; and two vacant single family residences.
- Commends the team for the thorough analysis and clear graphics.
- Would like proponents to summarize the pedestrian desire lines and nodes of activity.
 - Proponents stated that there are nodes on Madison St. and 21st Ave. in front of the grocery store and bus stop on the other side; at the private Planned Parenthood park that is open to the public at Madison St. and 20th Ave.; at the park and ball fields further south; and at Miller Park to the north. There is no main connecting alley east-west and people generally travel on the sidewalks.
- Would like to know whether the use of those alleys across 21st Ave. that are platted, but taken over is not a legal use.
 - Proponents stated that they are not legally taken over and that they are still officially alleys.
- Would like to know if the building is still stepping back in scheme C with less residential units.
 - Proponents stated that scheme C does not step back.
- Does not see a substantial difference in the number of units in scheme C.
 - Proponents stated that all schemes require higher lot coverage and scheme C would require an even greater lot coverage than 75 percent and less open space.
- Believes that in the no vacation scheme the alley does not count as open space and feels that proponents could ask for less open space and more coverage.
- Sees that proponents are not showing open space on the roof.
 - Proponents stated that they are not looking at the roof right now. At this point, it's a basic design and they haven't looked at the roof yet because of the difficulty in running an elevator and stair core and there would be roofing complications.
- Feels that two principle public benefits have been presented: relieving a nuisance for fire and garbage collection and increasing safety and decreasing loitering around the area. Believes that the safety and loitering issues have more to do with adjacent land uses. In addition, sees that "could have affordable housing" is listed as a public benefit so there is no commitment to that. Would like clarification on what the public benefits are.
 - Proponents stated that with scheme C, you will not see much of the public benefit. In the other schemes, public benefits are community rooms, the widening of the pedestrian space and public access, use of the traffic pattern in the area, and the courtyard on either end for public linkage. Proponents further stated that this development is much closer to what the community has requested, the requirements of the master plan, and the urban village plan.
- Feels that the team is being respectful of the neighborhood plan and other plans, however they are still getting use of additional space. They must conform with guidelines set forth, but also must go beyond these.

- Believes that proponents are proposing the public benefits as widening of pedestrian area, landscape, and paving in the alley; the courtyard; and the community room space. Sees only the work in the alley and the courtyard as public benefits and feels all the other features are things that would be there anyway in a new development.
- Would like to know if the 20 percent affordable housing rule is in effect.
 - Proponents stated that it is not.
 - Proponents stated that they would like direction from the Commission on a scheme and that schemes A, B, and C are progressively more difficult for the developer.
- Feels that scheme C is the clearest and simplest diagram of the site and believes there are about the same number of residential units as in the other schemes. Would be interested to see a section of the alley that shows what it could look like and feels that it could be like Post Alley with the upper units over the alley and the alley spatially still in place.
 - Proponents stated that Post Alley is a different kind of development and the activities and uses of this alley will not be comparable to Post Alley. One of the main items on C is that by opening up the development to the south side, they are losing the dialogue with Madison St. and are not able to create the mural of façade. The alley will also be dark and possibly unused and does not create a transition between densities or allowable height.
- Feels that the alley constructed for schemes A and B would be dark.
- Does not agree that scheme C is best. Feels that often the scheme of keeping the alley in a vacation petition is a throw-away scheme, but is not the case this time.
- Feels that all three schemes are interesting for their own reasons. Encourages the team, when they return, to have a larger diagram of how things work and what the public needs on this site. Is not confident that what they need is another commercial courtyard and is not sure that the alley is not needed.
- Would like to know if the southeast corner is available.
 - Proponents stated that it is owned by an adjacent property owner and is currently just a paved lot.
- Would like to clarify that this corner is shown as a courtyard, but is not owned by the proponents.
 - Proponents stated that half of the lot is owned by the proponent and they are talking to the other property owner about the lot.
- Feels that if proponents look at C more closely, there is the possibility of having parking accessed directly off the alley to create more green, open space and less impervious surface. Also feels that when there is a bias at the outset for the vacation, there is less effort put into the non-preferred alternative. Feels that there are possibilities that would make scheme C more positive and attractive.
- Suggests that proponents could also look into making the bridge over the alley wider so it functions more as a terrace.
- Is not convinced that trading open space off Madison St. for an indentation on Madison St. is a good urban design solution.
- Believes that to remove currently undesirable land use cannot be used as a public benefit.

Key Visitor Comments and Concerns

- A representative from SDOT stated that the alley improvements in scheme B are not taking into consideration what happens to the other side of the alley. Feels that it is tough to control or predict what happens to the other side and is concerned with the public streetscape. Does not want to see an

alley created that ends up conflicting with what happens on the other side.

- Proponents stated that, in any version of what happens on the other side, the improvements proposed in the scheme will be a public benefit. They are using elements to separate pedestrians from cars and adding green space to the project.

1 May 2003 Project: **Seattle University**

Phase: Alley Vacations Follow-Up

Previous Reviews: 6 March 2003 (Update), 7 November 2002 (Alley Vacations), 3 October 2002 (Alley Vacations)

Presenters: Michael Wishkoski, GGLO
Jerry Pederson, Seattle University

Attendees: Virginia Beas-Garcia, Legislative Dept.
Beverly Barnett, Seattle Dept. of Transportation
Michael Jenkins, Dept. of Design, Construction, and Land Use
Maria Barrientos, Seattle University Citizens Advisory Committee
Darlene Flynn, Dept. of Neighborhoods
Marilyn Senour, Seattle Dept. of Transportation
John Oliver Perry, Squire Park Community Council
Bill Zosel, Squire Park Community Council
Annie Meadows, resident
Laura Ciroi, resident
Daniel Mihalyo, resident
Annie Han, resident

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00286)

Action: The Commission thanks proponents for the presentation and their focused responses to previous concerns and comments, and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- The Design Commission has previously recommended approval of the vacation;
- supports the proposed design of East James Ct. including the use of stoops, walls, and appropriate materials, as well as the use of parking on both sides of the street in order to develop more integration into the context and character of this small street between 12th and 13th Aves.;
- strongly supports the community interest in and attention to the project;
- acknowledges efforts made on both sides and feels that the proposal has progressed;
- recommends that extreme care and control be exercised over the cash contribution to ensure that it serves the purpose of developing a community amenity;
- does not feel that the proposed public benefits package is sufficient to justify recommendation for approval of the vacation; and
- recommends additions be considered to the public benefits package, perhaps including an increased cash contribution.

Note: Commissioner Cipriani recused himself from this project review.

Commissioner Laughlin-Taylor abstained from the vote.

This project involves building a development at 12th Ave. and Cherry St. with housing above and retail on the ground floor, primarily the Seattle University (SU) Bookstore. The team is looking for final

recommendations on their public benefits package and for this review has specifically reacted to comments made by the Commission at the last meeting. Last time, the Commission felt that some amenities were more the result of good design and were not clearly public benefits. The team has tried to make the public benefits more clear this time.

12th Ave. has been activated with pedestrian activity and retail. Two public plazas have been developed at the corners of Jefferson St. and Cherry St. These will provide people with protection from traffic and places to sit with tables. An underserved bus stop is located at Jefferson St. and the plaza here will have seating, lighting, landscaping, and tables to create a better place for people to wait. Additional work has been put into the area adjacent to this—special paving, pedestrian-scale landscape, and seating around the bookstore. In addition, a small retail space has been put at the corner of 12th Ave. and James St. that is separate from and in addition to the bookstore. The awning of this retail will extend around the corner onto E. James. Ct.



The Commission had recommended simple building design and felt that alley functions should not be transferred onto the residential street. The team has responded to these concerns regarding E. James Ct. by placing pedestrian-scale stoops along this side of the building, creating a layered landscape that is finer grained and at a pedestrian level, and laying in

a special paving pattern. These make the building relate better to the single family scale across the street and improve the pedestrian experience. The E. James Ct. façade of the building is organized at a smaller scale with refined, simple materials. The team looked critically at alternate locations for the loading dock, but has kept it where it was. In order for the loading dock to work from anywhere else on the site, trucks would have to go through an L-2 zone, which is not prudent. They also explored putting loading in below grade, but with the 14-foot height requirement, this would have detrimental effects where the building meets the street. The focus became how to make the loading dock better. The door is lowered to the minimum 14-foot height and has a trellis. The door is less institutional with sectional, clean metal panels that are opaque so light will not spill out onto the street. In addition, the dock is set back from the façade and its use is restricted.

SU feels that these public benefits take the first step toward revitalizing 12th Ave. and creating future character for the street. The bookstore will draw 6000–8000 students each week. Originally,



they were contributing to corridor improvements because SDOT did not have enough money for what the neighborhood plan called for. However, since then SDOT has found funding for the corridor projects, so the SU money that was going toward patterned crosswalks and curb bulbs can go elsewhere. The four public benefits are the plaza on Cherry St., the plaza on Jefferson St., neighborhood meeting spaces provided by SU, and \$75,000, which was originally for corridor improvements, given to the neighborhood. Department of Neighborhoods (DoN) will act as the escrow holder for this money.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like to know what size the trucks are and if the school has committed to keeping the loading dock door shut most of the time.
 - Proponents stated that there are concerns from the neighbors about the noise of raising and lowering it often, so they were thinking of keeping it open most of the time during the day. However, they have not decided on this yet.
- Would like to know the size of the bookstore and the additional retail.
 - Proponents stated that the bookstore is 16,000 ft² and the retail is 400 ft².
- Would like to know if there will be a café in the bookstore.
 - Proponents stated that there is currently a convenience store department and that will be kept, but they are not sure there is a need for a café with other places so close.
- Would like to know if DoN could work with the community groups and find some other possible solutions for the 2000 ft² space.
 - Proponents stated that that is what led to the idea of contributing \$75,000 and that perhaps ground-level space could be found elsewhere. They would have to raise money to do this, but SU's contribution could go toward such a space.
- Sees two views of community being expressed: the physical fabric that consists of paving, stoops, etc. and the network of community contacts that is less easily documented, but still very important. Feels that it is difficult to compare such different things as these physical pieces and this arts incubator room that would serve more as a piece of neighborhood identity.
- Is fundamentally uncomfortable with legislating enclosed space as a public benefit because it does not necessarily assure long term public space. Feels that it is the Commission's task to look at public spaces in the permanent sense and how the design responds to that.
- Feels that, compared with last time, the biggest changes are on E. James Ct. with streetscape improvements, the breaking down of scale, addition of stoops, fitting in the loading dock, and placing parking on both sides. The cash contribution is another big change. However, believes that the plazas were there and the small retail is a good idea, but they cannot be sure what will happen with it. Feels that the question is whether these things are enough to assuage the issues.
- Feels that it is disingenuous to show something that is already built as a public benefit.
 - Proponents stated that what is there is just paving and they are suggesting significant changes such as adding steps, landscaping, and lighting.
- Is comfortable with not having the 2000 ft² indoors because alleys are used for services and by pedestrians and sees outdoor public benefit space being more on par with that.

- Is struggling with the issues of public benefits and how to be sure they are permanent. Feels that improvements along E. James Ct. are very appropriate. The Commission recommended approval of the vacation before with regard to urban design and now it is down to the public benefits. Would like to see the City somehow respond to the community's desire for art space, but not necessarily in this project.
- Would like to know if they could suggest something specific like having the \$75,000 grow into something more useful by partnering with another group.
- Would like to know what would happen with the money associated with the alley vacation.
 - A representative from SDOT stated that half the money would be spent on open space and transportation and could be used anywhere within the city, not just in this neighborhood, and the other half of the money would go to CIPs. The money goes to the City as whole because streets and alleys are public spaces for all of the city.
- Does not feel that the public benefits proposed—improvements to one street, two sort-of already existing plazas, and \$75,000—are enough.
- Feels that the Commission needs to step up and say what could work because they are saying no to the community and to the public benefits package proposed.
- Agrees that the E. James Ct. improvements are important, but questions whether good design is really a public benefit.
- Recommends that the \$75,000 be more or that one of the two public plazas on the field be made into a social gathering space rather than a visual walk through.
- Would like to know if the community can use the fields.
 - Proponents stated that they do not restrict the use, except for not allowing cleats on the field, and the fields can be used by the public when there is not a game happening.
- Does not feel that the proposal is there in terms of public benefits because it does not address the relative amount of the vacation.
- Wonders if an improvement would be to have an outdoor public space that is covered.
- Feels that the benefits could get iffy and intangible. If the \$75,000 is increased, but goes somewhere else or does something else, it no longer addresses the community.
 - Proponents stated that the \$75,000 came from the notion that the street crossings at Cherry St. and 12th Ave. would cost \$150,000. It came from something that is no longer relevant.

Key Visitor Comments and Concerns

- A neighborhood representative stated that one of the plazas stated as a public benefit already exists and it is across from a convenience store and seen as a public eyesore. The other plaza is already planned with the expansion of the track and field. The SU main campus is made up of 26 percent street and alley vacations and two-thirds of their open space is alley or street vacations. The existing character of the block along 12th Ave. is important with small, 45-foot streets and alleys. The representative further stated that they are asking for 2000 ft² of interior space for the public benefit.

- Proponents stated that the plaza that already exists has minimal amenities and they are proposing adding more seating and using more refined materials like stone.
- A Cherry Hill Community Association representative stated that the public benefits are scattered and do not respond to the wishes of the 12th Avenue Development Plan or the committees that SU has met with. They have not heard any response from the SU that addresses the neighborhood's wish for interior community space.
- A neighborhood resident stated that SU would be vacating 4688 ft² and developing it. Of this, 700 ft² will be private courtyard and 600 ft² will be meeting space. The community wants 2000ft² of interior space for a community arts room. The community is not against the development and recognizes that the bookstore will add good things, but feels that the public benefits need to be more substantial.
- The chair of the Seattle University Citizen's Advisory Committee stated that the project was reviewed at a July meeting and all but one person felt that the project should go forward. The Committee officially voted to support the public benefits offered. They feel that there are inherent conflicts of having an institution in an urban setting, but that SU is a gift to the city. The majority of the community who attended these meetings supported the project in general. The representative further stated that they believe the public benefit of the interior community space is an inappropriate benefit to ask of a development.
- A neighborhood resident stated that the community and SU have discussed interior versus exterior public benefits space. In the Commission's executive summary on vacations, it says that public housing is a possible public benefit and this is enclosed.
- A neighborhood representative stated that SU did, at one time, offer a flat \$150,000 cash contribution toward the use of the community's choice. Feels that it would be appropriate for the Commission to suggest rescinding the public benefit of the corner plazas and go back to a single cash contribution.

1 May 2003 Commission Business

ACTION ITEMS

A. TIMESHEETS

B. MINUTES FROM 17 APRIL 2003—APPROVED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

C. OUTSIDE COMMITMENT UPDATES

D. FEEDBACK FROM MARILYN T.—CUBELL AND ROYSE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

E. BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS RECEPTION—JUNE 9, 5–7PM,
BENAROYA HALL

F. OLMSTED CONFERENCE—MAY 1–5

G. DESIGN COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS MEETING—
MAY 13, 6PM

H. DESIGN REVIEW/DESIGN COMMISSION TOUR—MAY 29, 4–
6 PM

1 May 2003 Project: **Bitter Lake Reservoir Open Space**

Phase: Concept Design

Previous Reviews: None

Presenter: Virginia Hassinger, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Attendee: Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00303)

Action: The Commission appreciates seeing the project at this early stage and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- The Commission encourages proponents to make maximum use of public investment in this area by continuing to team up with other agencies early on;
- urges proponents to address the critical issue of having this project link up to the larger neighborhood and regional networks including trails, drainage systems, etc.;
- believes that a larger grand gesture is important to work with the size of the space and encourages this grand gesture be explored by the team along with the partner agencies;
- encourages the team to closely consider the constraints and opportunities on the site as the design is developed;
- urges the team to look at the examples given by the Commission of sites with successful grand gestures;
- encourages proponents to set clear design principles and guidelines to govern the design;
- encourages the team to more fully engage the community in the design and possibly the construction and planting of the project;
- suggests the team look at other public process mechanisms as a way of bringing in a community that may be alienated; and
- encourages proponents continue to work on making this an inspiring neighborhood project.

This is a small-scale ProParks project to develop the open space around the Bitter Lake Reservoir located in the northwest part of Seattle just off Aurora Ave. and 145th St. The reservoir was covered by Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) by a soft lid and is surrounded by a fence. The goal is to create a space for passive uses that may include walking paths, landscaping, a pea patch, and a children's play area. 143rd St. is flat and floods in a medium rain storm because there is no drainage, so any development done here needs to address drainage. SPU anticipates funding for a natural drainage system in this area, but currently there is just a drainage ditch that acts as a *de facto* drainage basin. Their intention was to put swales along 143rd St. and an infiltration basin, but that left the question of where the park would go. Thus, the two agencies decided to work together to make both possible and hired J.A. Brennan to do the design.

The next step was look at what to do with the street edge. Linden Ave. is asphalt with no curbs and 143rd St. is sub-standard concrete with no curbs, but has busses running down it. The neighborhood plan has conditionally accepted an urban village designation for vicinity of 10th and Linden Ave, provided Linden Ave. is developed as the main street. SDOT has proposed that there would be a north-south car travel lane

and a north-south bike lane, but a street plan has not been approved and funding for improvements has not been secured.

The team held a community meeting in February. Most attendees responded that they do not want a big development or a big park here. They are interested in landscaping and walking paths, but do not want the path to circle the whole reservoir because they do not want it behind their houses. The team came up with two schemes: one consists of a simple path and small plaza and the other celebrates the plaza space. The community preferred the first scheme, so the design team is looking at integrating walking paths with drainage. Proponents met again with SDOT, who had originally agreed to give up the turn lane and curbs and are now saying they want to keep the turn lane and put in curbs. If future street improvements cannot be decided on, the team will move ahead based on the most conservative approach.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Believes this could be a good candidate for the S.E.A. Streets program. Knows that the neighborhood needs help and feels that improving the streetscape might be a way to catalyze this. Believes that anything proponents can do to encourage SDOT and SPU to work together will make for a better project.
 - Proponents stated that timing is the biggest challenge and they are held to a schedule. SDOT is looking at putting in a bike lane to provide a connection to the Shoreline trail on Linden Ave. and would need to widen the street.
- Would like to know if Bitter Lake is ringed by single family homes.
 - Proponents stated that it is. There is a large area west of the reservoir with no connecting roads out.
- Feels that everything presented is a problem or constraint and believes that if they start looking at what is bad, a bad product will result. Encourages proponents to start with what is good about the site. Does not feel that, currently, the design is inspired by local conditions. Urges the team to think about the connections and the needs of the kids in the neighborhood as opportunities and inspirations.
 - Proponents stated that there have been a lot of complications in the process. They are working with SPU and have a good partnership, but have not been able to work out the timing with SDOT. They do need to get the project off the starting block and the added difficulty of security around the reservoir has become an issue.
- Urges the team to make design principles that state the good things to take advantage of, the things that need to be expanded, and the things that need to change, and include collaboration with SPU and SDOT.
- Would like to know if this is part of or near the Interurban Trail.
 - Proponents stated that the Interurban Trail would be a bike lane on Linden Ave. when implemented.
- Would like to clarify then that the east side of this project would be part of the trail.
 - Proponents stated that it would be.
- Would like to know what the larger picture is in terms of design parameters.
 - Proponents stated that the design considerations are the SPU open space requirements, a Linden Ave. plan that DoN is creating, the SPU natural drainage system, alternate

paving, public safety, the future Interurban Trail, a nearby bus stop, and City Light transmission lines. In the existing park is a concrete Scatter Piece sculpture and tables and chairs.

- Agrees that the design should relate closely with the realities of the site. Feels that the designer does not have a sense of scale of the site and that, conceptually, the wetlands could not be made that wiggly and would have simpler forms. Encourages proponents to focus on developing principles and understanding site constraints, and cautions against changing the topography. Also urges the team to work with and knit together the pieces at both a regional and neighborhood scale.
- Feels that what is interesting about this site is the reservoir in the middle and the dialogue between it as a no-man's-land and Bitter Lake. Feels that there are also interesting issues with stormwater collection, the lake, and the reservoir and the design could grab on to this and use conceptually. Suggests the team look at two examples of places that have used stormwater: Waterworks Garden in Renton and the South Wallingford Neighborhood Plan.
- Believes that the facility itself and the arts component need to play a bigger role in this community because the place is currently lacking identity. Because public investments are scarce, the team must derive as much punch as they can and accomplish multiple purposes with the project. Would like to see, through art and design, something that lifts the community and helps reclaim it and suggests using the planning process as a community-building exercise.
 - Proponents stated that there were to be three public meetings in conceptual design, but because of funding there will be two. After the initial kick-off, the team had an interdepartmental meeting to develop the ideas. What were brought today were just quick cartoons and the team will go back to the community with more developed concept design alternatives.
- Suggests that an artist get involved early and be given the chance to look at the grand gesture, the topography, and the neighborhoods needs and see how these can be informative.
- Would like to know if there is some way to get people up higher so they can look out over the neighborhood.
 - Proponents stated that SPU does not really want people up on the slope.
- Suggests that as they dig for the drainage system, that could be used as extra material.
- Feels that the diagrams convey an attitude about the project and that these notions need to be rethought. Suggests this be viewed as large, abstract earthworks project that needs to be dealt with in a large, abstract, and simple way.
- Encourages team to look at High Point and S.E.A. Streets and who worked on those at SDOT and SPU to get the best thinking on this project as well.

1 May 2003 Project: I-5 Open Space

Phase: Draft Site Plan

Previous Reviews: None

Presenters: David Goldberg, Seattle Parks and Recreation
Lorraine Pai, Cascade Design CollaborativeAttendees: Erik Stromberg, University of Washington
John Hartsfield, University of Washington
Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks and Recreation
Chris Leman, resident

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00301)

Action: The Commission is excited to see this project and the great work that has been done, and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- The Commission thanks the team for the thorough analysis of this unique and complicated site;
- supports the notion of this being a park that demands a mix of uses and functions;
- suggests that the team develop strong design principles that match the drama of this radical landscape and let loose in exploring the drama created by all of the layers including light, views, water, topography, columns, sound, and the sheer monumentality of being under this piece of infrastructure;
- encourages the team to be strategic about focusing the social spaces and how the program is arranged;
- appreciates the logical diagrams presented in terms of function, but suggests that the design team now push forward into creating an experiential place that stimulates all of the senses and incorporates the uncanny qualities of the space;
- applauds Parks and Recreation for viewing this in the context of other connections and the larger neighborhood in terms of circulation and open space; and
- recommends approval of draft site plan.

This is a ProParks project in Eastlake under I-5 with an estimated construction budget of \$1.1 million. The design team is at the site planning stage and has produced two alternatives that were borne from discussions with the advisory committee and a community survey. The park will serve as neighborhood open space with a number of uses, including both passive and active uses and as a connecting/circulation space. The team began the project two years ago with community outreach to see what people desired of the space. The neighborhood plan recommended pedestrian and bike connections, open space amenities, stormwater treatment, sport climbing, and lighting. Parks was interested in the site for creating an off-leash area that would replace the off-leash area closed in Volunteer Park. Mountain biking trails have also been introduced as the result of active involvement by the Backcountry Bicycle Trails Coalition. The property is owned by Washington State Dept. of Transportation (WSDOT). After some initial concerns from WSDOT, the team has received conceptual approval to design open space improvements. The space is one of the most significant areas downtown available to WSDOT to stage construction and detain water, so access through the site needs to remain. In looking at developing a site plan, flexibility is key

because the space must meet community and Parks' needs, but acknowledge that the duration of improvements is unknown. Parks is trying to accommodate all the uses that were brought to the table and had strong constituencies so there will be good stewardship of the site.

The site is a dramatic space bounded by Lakeview Blvd. to the east, Franklin Ave. to the west, Newton St. to the north, and Garfield St. to the south. The existing amenities are views along Howe St. and Blaine St. to Lake Union and the strength and drama of the columns. Constraints of the site are WSDOT will be adding to the structure of the columns and the team needs to coordinate with WSDOT on underground water detention. Natural resources on the site are a large stand of mature redwoods on Franklin Ave. and several other mature trees around the perimeter. Because of the cover of I-5, the space would be covered year-round and could be used in all weather. However, it will get no rain and requires irrigation. The space is zoned commercial, but is in the context of residential, too. There is little flat space and some of the steep slopes are slide zones. Access for bikers is from Eastlake Ave. and Lakeview Blvd. and access for pedestrians and runners is Blaine St. and Howe St., under the freeway, and connecting to Capitol Hill. There is parking along Franklin Ave. and many people who work in the area park here. There is one controlled traffic signal on Garfield St. and there are opportunities along Lakeview Blvd. at Blaine St. and Howe St. for controlled pedestrian crossings. People have expressed interest in using the area as a commuter route and SDOT hopes for access along Lakeview Blvd. to the park and to Newton St. to create an urban trail. Because the site is under I-5, the team is exploring air quality issues; there are several slots where it is open above, but the space is primarily covered. The two alternatives are bubble diagrams showing how different activities could be accommodated.

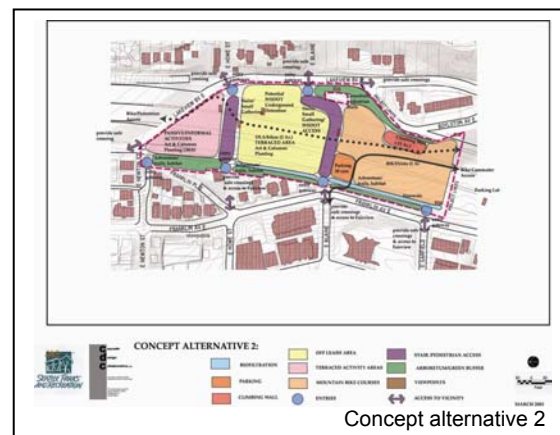
Alternate 1

In this scheme, the off-leash area is in the southern part of the site. Bikes are at the east because residents were concerned and wanted to keep activities separate from the residential areas. The 1.8 acre technical mountain bike course is flexible in terms of terrain, so it is in areas with lots of topography. Parking studies have not been done yet, but a lot of people feel that some parking is needed, so a total of 34 spaces were added at the east and west ends. Both staircases end up at Blaine St. for pedestrian circulation. The climbing area is about 0.15 acres. At the north is an informal, nonprogrammed area for views picnicking, gathering, and possibly art. There is a buffer all around the edges and cross-connections to Capitol Hill for bike commuters and others is encouraged. The vaults for water detention are 30 x 60 feet and basketball courts or some similar element could be placed on top.

Alternate 2

In this scheme, all the same functions are accommodated, but areas for each are more evenly distributed and are about 2 acres.

There is a preference for alternative 1 because it breaks up the activities more. The team has done a pedestrian ramp study to explore providing an ADA route that follows desire lines for east-west circulation. Parks is trying to balance circulation and transportation and would like to provide east-west access for people with mobility issues. The site drops 85 feet, so there are a lot of ramps to get a 1:20 slope. Additional complications are that they cannot do much cut and fill around the columns and there needs to be vehicular access through the space. The ramps could become major design elements. The columns are 13 feet on center and they cannot build within 6 feet of the columns.



Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Urges proponents to create a drawing showing the limitations of constructing around the columns.
- Congratulates the team because this is a strange and cool project. Would like to see the strange eeriness of the columns reflected in the design principles and urges the team to develop strong, funky design principles. Believes that the diagram is good to make sure everything fits, but would like to see the team back off and think about each element and how they come together. Also urges the team to be more strategic about where they concentrate the social energy of the site and where solitary spaces are appropriate.
- Believes that biggest constraint is the physical nature of the freeway above and the topography of the land below. Feels that the sooner this is expressed, the better because the physical constraints will determine how the site works. Also feels that the extra 6 feet required around the columns decrease space and will change how the team designs. Supports having a strong project that is not fussy with one or two big ideas and can see ramps being part of this warped surface.
- Compliments the team on the presentation and starting with the positive aspects of the site. Feels that the diagrams are good, but are merely spatial analyses and now that those are done the team can break loose. Feels that how the trail goes through the site will be a strong form giver.
- Believes that there are two important layers: water and how water interacts with topography. Encourages the team to talk with SPU about incorporating this. Believes that the columns link the space and offer opportunities in terms of art.
- Encourages proponents, where there are slots of light, to think about Stonehenge and the Aztecs and how these pieces of light can be tied in.
- Urges the team to look at examples in Hong Kong of where gunnite was used to catch water and create pockets of vegetation. Also feels that there is intimacy of smaller spaces within and encourages the team to look at how vistas can be captured.
- Feels that “raw” is a word that comes to mind for this project because it is a place that you want people to come to and wonder if it really is a place at all.
- Encourages the team to think about making a structural engineering experience by leaving in some of the formwork as the seismic upgrade is performed. Would like the team to explore the idea of what happens when, from one place in the park all you can see is the columns and from another place all you can see is the water.
- Urges the team to recognize the continuous unnatural roar of sound from above. It can be either a positive or negative, but should be recognized.
- Would like to know more about the art component.
 - Proponents stated that it is one of the three major projects in the ProParks Art Plan. John Roloff is the artist and they hired him because his art is “uncanny.” His background is in geology and he does research-based art.

Key Visitor Comments and Concerns

- A resident stated that there are delays that people feel are hampering the process. The resident further

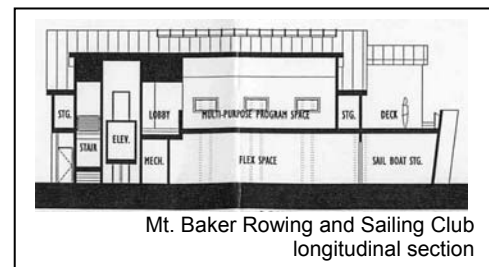
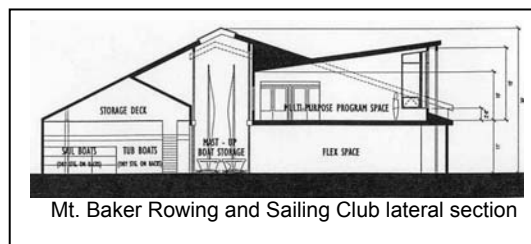
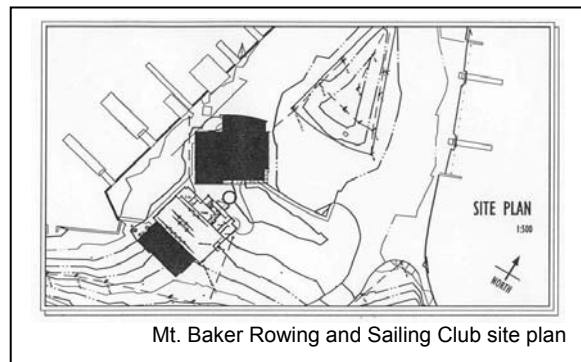
stated that there is parking nearby for the Gates Foundation that the community would like to be able to use on occasion at night. The community is concerned that both options have a large off-leash area and the amount of money and land that will be consumed by it. With regard to east-west access, Parks and Recreation has not committed to 24-hour access between the existing stairs and the site. Also feels that it is not safe to walk between the existing stairs and would like to see safe pedestrian crossings and sidewalks. Crossings at Newton, Boylston, and Lakeview are priorities for the neighborhood and to use Parks and Recreation money would not be good. Feels that SDOT should put in curbs bulbs and flashing lights.

1 May 2003 Project: **Mt. Baker Rowing and Sailing Boathouse**
 Phase: Schematic Design
 Previous Review: 2 August 2001 (Schematic Design)
 Presenters: Steven Wright, Seattle Parks and Recreation
 Robin Abrahams, Abrahams Architecture
 Kevin O’Leary, Abrahams Architecture
 Attendee: Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks and Recreation
 Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00240)

Action: The Commission thanks the proponents for the presentation and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

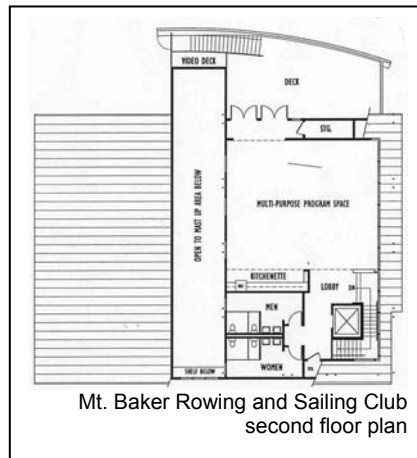
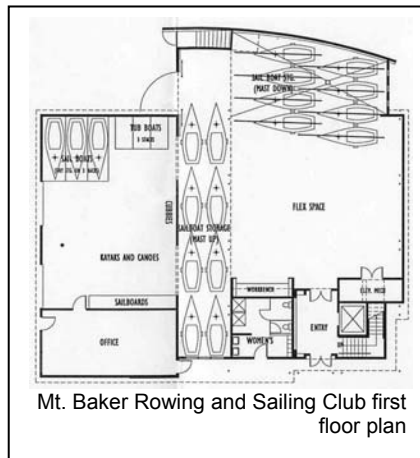
- The Commission applauds the change in design direction to expanding the two existing buildings and eliminating the third structure;
- appreciates the efficiency with which the team is approaching the design;
- suggests that proponents simplify or clarify the forms and consider the buildings in the round, that all of the sides should express their function;
- would like to see more made of the center of gravity of the boat launching area and encourages the team to consider opening up the buildings on that side;
- feels that the team has done a good job of clarifying and making the circulation work, but feels that the entry sequence is still not as clear as it could be and suggests the team work with the landscape in redesigning this area;
- urges the team to explore creating an overlook onto the prime activity area; and
- recommends approval of the updated schematic design.

This project came before the Commission two years ago in schematic design as a new two-story building. The current building is maxed out and there is demand for more recreation space. In the previous alternative, there was a question of location, but the Commission recommended approval of the building. However, a building that close to Lake Washington Blvd. impacted a lot of historic views, so the team went back and came up with two new alternative schematic designs. One scheme was a stand-alone two-story building and the other was an addition to the existing boathouse. The team took these two schemes to the public and they preferred the two-story option. It has bad weather day indoor space and



impacts parking the least. This scheme has been to the advisory committee several times and has had two technical reviews.

There are two design ideas for the project: to give face to the community of buildings on the street and to the regatta, and to declare the entry/welcoming point. As people come off the road, people will see where they want to go and be able to identify the entry. Employees in the office have visual access out to the patrons, the garage, and the boats. A public deck faces the lake and provides a place to view the water and regattas. The form of the building is reminiscent of nautical themes with curves and flags. A spine through the middle with skylights provides mast-up boat storage as well as a place for natural light to penetrate. The downstairs is open flex space for exercise. A meeting room above also serves as flex space



and has a deck attached. When the team worked on the program they revised the public door to the office. The existing office door faces the water and there are two doors, which makes it confusing. In the new scheme, the office door is on the street side and has glass, so there is better visual access. From a design standpoint, this new piece of structure will add length to the new and old and it will look as if it is all one building.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Appreciates the efficiency with which the team is approaching this and feels that it looks like an old style boathouse. However, feels it is turned backwards and does not seem like an old boathouse from the water side.
 - Proponents stated that the boats go in at the center, but races happen to the north. The southwest is shallow, so there is not a lot of staging.
- Feels that there is natural human energy in the center at the courtyard.
- Would like to know where people will drive in and what the sequence of entry will be.
 - Proponents stated that they come in along Lake Washington and park to the east. They walk into the center where there is a outdoor court. They come in the glazed office door at the corner and enter into a display space.
- Would like to know how you enter when you are rowing.
 - Proponents stated that there is not enough money to articulate the existing façade more than it is now other than adding some fenestration on the boulevard site.
- Feels that where people go out could be treated like the back of a house given the amount of action that will take place there.
 - Proponents stated that the public and Friends of Olmsted did not want extensive work on

that side.

- Feels that when you are rowing, you don't care about the architecture and are looking at the rowing. Believes that this spot is a dismal promontory on Lake Washington and feels it is a nice gesture to put the façade that way so at the entrance you notice the building and then go on to watch the action of the boathouse. Feels that there is nice resolution of the circulation problems, but would like to see something in the landscape that ensures people are funneled the way the team is intending.
- Likes the massing of the building, but does not feel that the team has fully resolved the entry sequence. Urges them to be clear in the design of the landscape so people know where to go in.
- Feels that the central part is a funnel, but for people who have not been there before the entrance must be obvious.
- Feels that the buildings need to be simpler and that too many details are being articulated, but does believe that the project is better without a third building.
 - Proponents stated that with the addition on the first building they flexibility in how to put it together phase-wise.
- Agrees that the masses are in the right place, but doesn't mind the façade on this dismal windswept place. Feels the façade could be less fussy, but likes having the height of the building.
- Encourages the team to look at the boathouse at the University of Washington because it is a simple, yet bold and beautiful structure.
- Believes that this structure is across from Genesee Park and suggests that it would be good to look at the larger context.
 - Proponents stated that they did look at that in terms of context and views.
- Suggests that proponents consider integrating the roofs so that the project looks like one building rather than an addition.
- Feels that the buildings should be looked at as simple buildings in the round, each having a quality.
- Would like to see an overlook onto the center of activity on the water side.

1 May 2003 Project: **Cowen Park Shelter House Improvements**
 Presenters: Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks and Recreation
 Bob Hoshide, Hoshide Williams
 Attendees: Don Bullard, Seattle Parks and Recreation
 Jaime Young, University of Washington
 Heather Nickel, University of Washington

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00302)

Action: The Commission thanks the proponents for coming and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- The Commission compliments the design team on the sensitivity with which they have looked the building and, although the building was not landmarked, working within the vocabulary of the Olmsted style;
- recognizes the need to renovate the building, but is concerned with the loss of a structure on the upper deck and feels it is a lost opportunity, primarily because of the way a structure contains the space to make it a comfortable and enjoyable space;
- encourages the team to look at the terrace's valuable edge as a place people will want to go to and respond with structures and seating;
- feels that the provision of a trellis or some other overhead structure should be a greater priority than benches, lights, and a railing and encourages Parks and Recreation to explore reallocation of the budget accordingly; and
- the Commission had a split vote on whether to recommend approval of design development.

This is one of a series of new buildings in the Parks system that is slated for renovation. The building went to the Landmarks Board, but was not designated. It was originally built around 1909 and Cowen Park is an Olmsted park. The original form was just the first floor that was built into the hillside with a playground out front and a bandstand at sidewalk level on the roof. In 1929, the trolley stop and bathroom were added to the top. Current use of the building consists of the bathrooms on top, an activity room on the lower floor, and access from the street.

Programmatically, the goal for this project is for the lower floor to be used for day camp programs in summers and as a community classroom and meeting space. The bathrooms above will be demolished; the community has expressed concern because the existing bathrooms do not feel safe. Restrooms will be built on the lower floor with men's on one side women's on the other with central activity space in between. The park-fronting wall will also be opened and some of the infill walls will be replaced. The upper floor will be restored as viewing terrace; access to this area is important because it shows up in the Olmsted plan. The team is also putting in an open metal railing and making the sidewalk in front more pleasant, which will also help the Police Dept. The whole upper structure will be gone; the team looked at bringing the space back to its previous character with an overhead structure, but the community is concerned with it being a gathering space for homeless. Benches and lights that are used by Parks and Recreation in Olmsted parks will be installed on the terrace.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like to know if the upper building is in reasonable structural condition and the main concern is

use by homeless.

- Proponents stated that it is marginal structurally. In addition, Parks and Recreation has been dealing with the roof leaking for a long time and roofing companies have suggested that it needs a new roofing membrane.
- Does not understand why an open pavilion roof would not be a reasonable solution. Feels that the technical problems could be solved because they would be putting in a new roof and pavers anyway.
- Would like to know if it is possible to remove the bathrooms walls and open completely.
 - Proponents stated that the engineer said they could not remove bathroom walls and would have to tear them down and start over.
- Believes that some concerns are dealing with the social problems that are present throughout the park.
- Urges the team to consider an open trellis rather than enclosed roof. Does not feel that people will use those benches because they are so far from the edge and encourages the team to put seating at the edge.
- Suggests the possibility of having an open trellis on the building perimeter so people could be under it and have a sense of overhead protection. Feels this would also address some social issues and make the space more inviting.
 - Proponents stated that they had a scheme early on with a trellis on three sides but it was eliminated due to budget constraints and because it could be a climbing opportunity.
- Formally, feels that a hipped roof in from the edge could be effective, but understand budget constraints.
- Would also like to see cover overhead so it could be more of a gathering place than a place for viewing and quickly passing through.
- Feels that 30 x 40 feet is a big area.
- Does not feel that this seems like a place that you would go and spend time and feels it looks foreboding without a structure.
 - Proponents stated that they talked about a trellis type system and could show it as a bid alternative, so there might be a fighting chance.
- Would like to know if there is ADA access to the terrace level.
 - Proponents stated that they do not know if it meets code, but you can get there from the park.